



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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Signature verification completed for death penalty referendum

LINCOLN – Secretary of State John Gale announced today that county election officials have completed their task of approving or rejecting nearly 169,000 petition signatures submitted as part of the petition drive to repeal LB 268 and reinstate the death penalty. County certifications have been received by the Secretary of State within the 40 days allowed by law.

“Having totaled the valid signatures and determining that the constitutional and statutory requirements have been met, we are confirming with petition sponsors that both goals of their petition referendum have been achieved,” Gale said.

The 2016 general election ballot will allow Nebraska voters to decide if a legislatively-approved law abolishing the death penalty is repealed or retained. In addition, enough signatures have been collected to stay the effective date of LB 268 until voters decide the issue.

At least 56,942 signatures were required to add the petition referendum to the ballot. Ten percent of signatures, at least 113,883, were required to keep LB 268 from going into effect. “More than 143,000 signatures were verified to our office from counties where signatures were collected, which was more than enough to meet each of those thresholds,” explained Gale.

In addition, signatures of more than five percent of registered voters were collected in 85 of the state’s 93 counties. This meets the constitutional distribution requirement of 38 counties for a referendum petition.

"Certified letters have been mailed to the sponsors, notifying them as to the results of the petition campaign," added Gale.

He went on to explain that the next steps for his office wouldn't occur until next year, closer to the election.

"At that time, we will schedule dates for three public hearings to be held in each of the three congressional districts as well as produce a brochure about the death penalty referendum that will be distributed to each of the county election offices."

Information about the death penalty referendum, as well as other petitions currently in circulation can be found on the Secretary of State's website at: <http://www.sos.ne.gov/elec/2016/elections.html>.

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